



absorbed by the absorbent core.” Therefore, it is the open channel which “holds” the discharge and thus is the section that represents the acquisition zone. Yang does not teach that the transfer layer holds the discharge. It is therefore applicant’s position that the Examiner has mischaracterized the transfer layer as an acquisition layer. Therefore, Yang does not provide the missing teaching of an acquisition layer with binder resin.

Additionally, Applicants note that the Examiner has relied on Koczab specifically against claim 2. According to the Examiner, “Koczab discloses that the upper fibrous layer is airlaid at column 4, line 8, [and that] the acquisition layer has a lower density than the distribution zone 3, as disclosed in column 4, lines 25-27 and 52-55.” (See Office Action, page 3). At lines 25-27 and 52-55, the patent refers to measurements of weight per unit area, which represent units for basis weight. Thus, the Examiner has relied on teachings of basis weight values, rather than density values, which are measured in weight per unit volume. Therefore, Koczab does not teach the density gradient.

Based on this detailed review of the references, Applicants respectfully submit that it would not be obvious to one skilled in the art to combine Koczab with Yang to arrive at the presently claimed invention.

Claims 3 and 9 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over Koczab in view of Yang and Statutory Invention Registration (SIR) No. H1657 (to Hammons). According to the Examiner, Koczab and Yang teach all aspects of the claimed invention as indicated above with the exception of the composition of the storage layer. The Examiner states that Hammons provides the storage layer composition, thereby rendering the claims obvious.

The rejection is respectfully traversed, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Applicants submit that Koczab and Yang fail to teach the presently claimed invention as discussed above. It is Applicants’ position that these references fail to teach the limitations of the presently claimed embodiments. The Examiner’s reliance on Hammons to teach an airfelt aspect of the storage layer compositions fails to provide the missing teaching of the acquisition layer and binder resin. Therefore, again, it would not be obvious to combine the references to arrive at the claimed invention.

In view of the above remarks, it is respectfully requested that the application be reconsidered and that all pending claims be allowed and the case passed to issue.

If there are any other issues remaining which the Examiner believes could be resolved through either a Supplemental Response or an Examiner's Amendment, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below.

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Respectfully submitted,

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